

Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ERDA-05 ACDA-05 OMB-01 /064 W

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FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 331

INFO CNO NIACT IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR NIACT IMMEDIATE

SECDEF WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE

CINCUSNAVEUR NIACT IMMEDIATE

CINCLANT NIACT IMMEDIATE

CINCLANT FLT NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T OSLO 3653

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MNUC NARR OCLR NO

SUBJ: USS NIMITZ VISIT TO NORTHERN EUROPE

REF: (A) CNO 270005Z AUG 75, (B) USDAO OSLO 261545Z AUG 75
(C) OSLO 3542, (D) STATE 196713, (E) OSLO 3397, (F) OSLO 3463

1. NORWEGIAN CABINET, CHAIRED BY PRIME MINISTER BRATTELI, MET AUGUST 28 TO DECIDE UPON POSSIBILITY OF "NIMITZ" VISIT TO OSLO AND DECISION WAS TO GRANT APPROVAL OF VISIT BUT SPECIFIED IT SHOULD BEGIN ON SEPTEMBER 22. CABINET MEETING ON SHIP VISIT WAS AN EXTRAORDINARY ONE. REASONS GIVEN FOR SPECIFYING SEPT. 22 DATE WAS THAT ICELANDIC PRIME MINISTER WILL BE AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO OSLO FROM SEPT 18-20 AND NORWEGIAN AUTHORITIES DO NOT WANT SHIP VISIT TO DETRACT FROM THIS LONG-PLANNED VISIT OF NORDIC COLLEAGUE.

2. IN VIEW OF THIS REQUIRED DELAY WE WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO AVOID FURTHER PRESS SPECULATION ON ISSUE BY
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GIVING NORWEGIANS IMMEDIATE ANSWER AS TO WHETHER VISIT

CAN BE CONDUCTED AT SPECIFIED DATE OR WHETHER IT MUST BE CANCELLED AS INDICATED IN CNO TELEGRAM 270005Z AUG 75 STATING THAT VISIT CANNOT BE DELAYED BEYOND ORIGINALLY REQUESTED DATE. REQUEST IMMEDIATE REPLY FROM DEPT. ON THIS.

3. VISIT WAS APPROVED AFTER DISCUSSION WHICH HINGED VERY MUCH UPON SUPPORT GIVEN BY FOREIGN AND DEFENSE MINISTRIES AND FOREIGN MINISTER'S ARGUMENT THAT NORWAY CLEARLY COULD NOT REFUSE THE VISIT. DEFENSE MINISTER FOSTERVOLL WAS OUT OF OSLO AND COULD NOT ATTEND MEETING BUT HAD CAREFULLY WORKED OUT HIS POSITION SUPPORTING VISIT WITH UNDER SECRETARY AASLAND WHO REPRESENTED MOD.

4. THERE WAS NO QUESTION ABOUT VISIT ON TECHNICAL GROUNDS, AS THE STATE INSTITUTE FOR RADIATION HYGIENE HAD FOUND OSLO TO BE A SUITABLE PORT FOR NUCLEAR WARSHIP VISIT. THE KEY ISSUE WAS THE POLITICAL ONE RELATED TO THE MUNICIPAL/PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS ON SEPT 14-15. PRIME MINISTER BRATTELI, WHO APPROVED FINAL DECISION, ACCORDING TO FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND, WAS UPSET ABOUT US REQUEST AT THIS CRUCIAL TIME AND EXPRESSED VIEW THAT IT BROKE GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT NOT TO RAISE OR CONDUCT MANEUVERS OR SHIP VISITS IN NORWAY DURING ELECTION PERIOD. HE WAS CONCERNED THAT IN CAMPAIGN WHERE NO CLEAR ISSUES HAVE EMERGED AND WHERE LABOR HAS OPPORTUNITY TO BREAK THE DIVIDED RANKS OF THE SOCIALIST LEFT PARTY (SV), WHICH OPPOSES NORWAY'S SUPPORT OF NATO, THE VISIT QUESTION GAVE SV UNEXPECTED ISSUE ON WHICH TO ATTACK THE GOVERNMENT. SV HAS, IN FACT, ALREADY ANNOUNCED PLANS TO HOLD DEMONSTRATIONS TO PROTEST VISIT. OTHER MEMBERS OF CABINET HAD EARLIER EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE EMOTIONAL APPROACH TO NUCLEAR QUESTIONS IN NORWAY, AND DEFENSE MINISTER FOSTERVOLL TOLD ME AUGUST 27 THAT HE FEARED THAT DURING ELECTION CAMPAIGN, WHERE THERE WERE SOME DIFFERENCES OF VIEW AMONG BOTH CABINET AND LABOR PARTY CAMPAIGNERS ON NUCLEAR MATTERS, PUBLIC EXCHANGE ON "NIMITZ" VISIT COULD LEAD TO DIVERGENT AND MISLEADING REPLIES, COMPLICATING FUTURE NUCLEAR SHIP VISITS. ALL OF THESE CONSIDERATIONS WERE FURTHER COMPLICATED BY THE PREMATURE

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LEAKS ON BOTH SIDES.

5. THE FOREIGN OFFICE ISSUED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT CONCERNING THE VISIT ON THE AFTERNOON OF AUGUST 28:

BEGIN TEXT

AS EARLIER MENTIONED, THE NORWEGIAN AUTHORITIES

HAVE RECEIVED A PRELIMINARY INQUIRY ABOUT A VISIT BY THE AMERICAN NUCLEAR-POWERED CARRIER "NIMITZ" IN OSLO IN THE LATTER PART OF SEPTEMBER IN CONNECTION WITH SIMILAR VISITS TO OTHER NATO COUNTRIES.

THE QUESTION OF POSSIBLE RADIATION HAZARDS INVOLVED IN THE SHIP VISIT HAS BEEN SUBMITTED TO THE STATE INSTITUTE OF RADIATION HYGIENE. IT HAS NO OBJECTION TO THE VISIT ON THE CONDITION THAT CERTAIN SAFETY MEASURES ARE OBSERVED. ON THE BASIS OF THEIR BACKGROUND, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS TODAY INFORMED THE AMERICAN EMBASSY THAT THE NORWEGIAN AUTHORITIES HAVE NO OBJECTION TO THE VISIT.

END TEXT

6. FOREIGN MINISTER TOLD ME HE USED "NORWEGIAN AUTHORITIES" IN STATEMENT RATHER THAN NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT BECAUSE HE WANTED THE MATTER TO BE TREATED AS A ROUTINE REQUEST AND DID NOT WISH NUCLEAR ISSUE TO APPEAR TO REQUIRE ELEVATING TO CABINET LEVEL.

7. EMBASSY PLANS TO INFORM PRESS THAT US REQUEST FOR VISIT WAS EXPLORATORY IN VIEW OF FACT THE "NIMITZ" WOULD BE IN THE AREA, AND THAT IN LIGHT OF FOREIGN MINISTRY'S DECISION, IT WILL NOW BE DETERMINED IF SHIP'S SCHEDULING WILL PERMIT A VISIT TO NORWAY DURING SHIP'S CURRENT CRUISE.

7. I BELIEVE THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS SINCERE IN SPECIFYING A DELAY UNTIL SEPT 22 SO AS NOT TO DETRACT FROM THE ICELANDIC PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT (WHICH ADMITTEDLY PROVIDED A CONVENIENT EXCUSE), AND THAT THEY ARE SECRET

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WILLING TO RECEIVE THE "NIMITZ" AT THAT TIME. THERE IS NO DOUBT ALSO THAT THE PROSPECT OF CREATING AN ELECTION ISSUE WHICH COULD HURT LABOR'S TENUOUS POSITION, PARTICULARLY IN OSLO, IS EXTREMELY WORRISOME TO THEM.

9. I CONCLUDE FROM CNO TELEGRAM 270005 AUG 75, THAT THE RESCHEDULING OF THE VISIT WOULD PRECLUDE THE "NIMITZ" VISIT TO OSLO. HOWEVER, I BELIEVE THE EXERCISE HAS GAINED US SOME GROUND, IN THAT THE TECHNICAL AUTHORITIES HAVE GIVEN US THE GREEN LIGHT TO USE OSLO FOR NUCLEAR SHIPS (THEY HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED ON EARLIER NUCLEAR SHIP VISITS). FACT THAT WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN APPROVAL FOR THIS VISIT BY CABINET REINFORCES THE PRINCIPLE AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL THAT NUCLEAR SHIP VISITS MAY BE CONDUCTED HERE.

CONSEQUENTLY, I WOULD HOPE THAT WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO COME
FORWARD WITH ANOTHER REQUEST FOR A NUCLEAR SHIP VISIT TO
NORWAY AT A DATE SUITABLY REMOVED FROM WHAT IS BECOMING
A DEBATE OVER "NIMITZ" VISIT. I FEEL VERY CONFIDENT
THAT WE WILL RECEIVE EARLY APPROVAL AND FULL
COOPERATION IN ANY FUTURE VISIT IN A NON-SENSITIVE PERIOD.
BYRNE

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NNN

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